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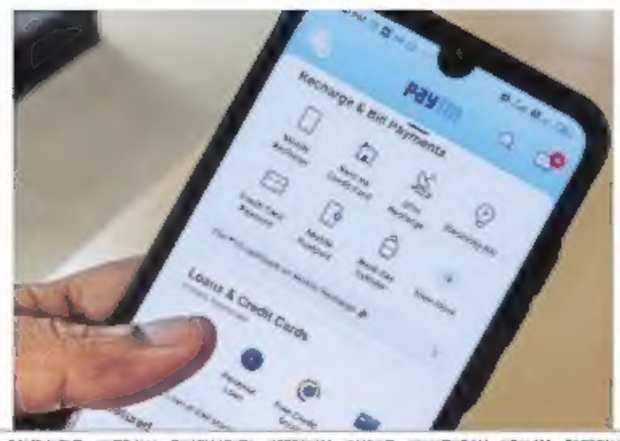


RBI again bars Paytm Payments Bank from opening new accounts

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday asked Paytm Payments Bank to stop opening new accounts amid "material supervisory concerns" observed in the bank. This is the third time that Paytm Payments Bank is facing action from the banking regulator since its inception in May 2017. It has been prohibited from opening new accounts for the second time | P13

Congress faces all-round attack after poll debacle

G-23 leaders seek timely elections in party

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

THE Congress' flop show in five state elections, including its worst-ever performance in Uttar Pradesh under Priyanka Gandhi, has triggered an all-round attack against the top leadership with G23 leaders holding a meeting on Friday to press for urgent reforms in the party.

The leadership's arrogance and its growing disconnect with the people, the running of the party by a clique of sycophants who have no support among people are some of the issues being openly discussed by party leaders.

The G23 leaders, considered dissidents by those close to Rahul Gandhi, met on Friday at the residence of former Union minister Ghulam Nabi Azad in New Delhi. Lok Sabha MP Manish Tewari, deputy leader of the party in the Rajya Sabha Anand Sharma and Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal were present.

During the meeting, the leaders agreed that during the Congress Working Committee (CWC) meeting, to be convened soon, they would press for reforms in the party, democratisation of decision making and timely elections for the post of Congress president and members of the CWC.

Sources said these leaders will also demand accountability for the electoral reverses and more inner-party democracy to be able to freely evaluate the party's decisions and performance of various hand-picked functionaries.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, too, had advised Congress to shed its aggressive attitude and work with the opposition parties with a positive attitude if it wished to play a role in challenging the BJP in 2024.

Former MP Sandeep Dikshit, who was also part of G23 group, fired the first salvo at the party leadership by re-issuing a letter he had written to Sonia Gandhi when she was the party president. In the letter, Dikshit has decried the party's drifting away from the very ideals on which it was formed.

CONTINUED ON: P9

Mann to take oath on Wed

AAP leader Bhagwant Mann will be sworn in as Punjab chief minister on March 16 at Khatkar Kalan, the ancestral village of legendary freedom fighter Bhagat Singh

SHOW OF STRENGTH

Prime Minister Narendra Modi gestures to his supporters during a road show in Ahmedabad on Friday | AFP | P6

Russia prepares for final assault on Kyiv

674 more Indians return

Three flights carrying 674 Indians evacuated from Sumy landed in New Delhi on Friday. The flights from Poland's Rzeszow were among the last under Operation Ganga

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

AS the Russian invasion of Ukraine entered the 16th day, Moscow ramped up and expanded its offensive by striking new cities in the central and western parts of the country and regrouping its forces to launch the final assault on capital Kyiv.

On Friday, Russian air strikes hit two cities that had been far from Moscow's main targets elsewhere, Ukraine said. According to reports, the military airfields in Lutsk and Ivano-Frankivsk were destroyed while Russian strikes hit the east-central city of Dnipro for the first time since Moscow's offensive began, killing at least one person.

The UNHRC put the total civilian casualties in Ukraine at 549. Nearly 1,000 people were injured since the attacks began on February 24, it added. With the conflict continuing, US President Joe Biden said on Friday that his country, along with the G7 and European Union, will call for revoking Russia's 'most favoured nation' status to pave the way for tariffs to be imposed on Russian imports.

Meanwhile, Ukraine president's office on Friday alleged that Russia has recruited 16,000 ex-ISIS fighters, a claim rejected by Moscow. P12

Missile that hit Pakistan was fired accidentally

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

A day after Pakistan said a missile from India landed in its territory, the Centre clarified that an unarmed projectile was accidentally fired due to a technical malfunction.

"On March 9, 2022, in the course of routine maintenance, a technical malfunction led to the accidental firing of a missile," the Defence Ministry said in a statement.

The government is taking the matter seriously and a high-level Court of Inquiry has been ordered, the ministry said.

"The missile landed in an area of Pakistan. While the incident is deeply regrettable, it is also a matter of relief that there has been no loss of life," the statement said.

Pakistan on Thursday night said a high-speed flying object from India violated its airspace and crashed near Mian Channu in its Punjab province. As per its estimate, the missile originated near Sirsa in Haryana.

Islamabad on Friday summoned India's Charge d'Affaires and conveyed its strong protest.

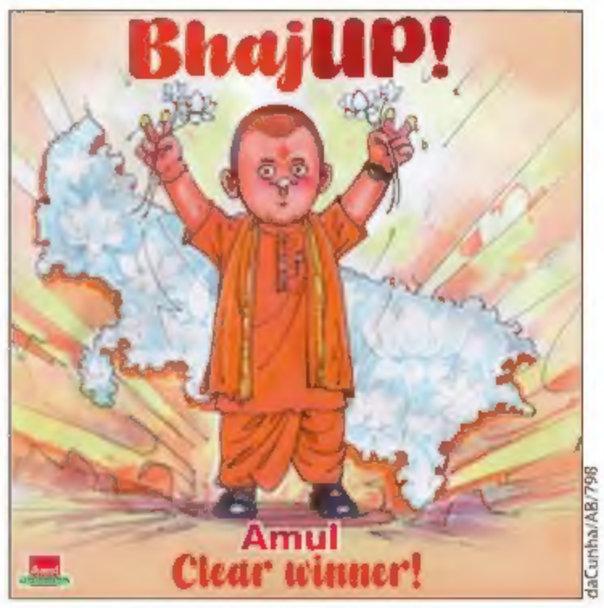
EXPRESS READ

CBSE Term II exams for Classes 10, 12 from April 26

New Delhi: Term-II CBSE board exams for Classes 10 and 12 will start from April 26, according to the schedule released on Friday. Class 10 exams will end on May 24 and for Class 12, on June 15. P10

NATIONWIDE	MAR 10	MAR 11
Fresh cases	4,184	4,194
Recoveries	6,554	6,208
Deaths	104	255

KARNATAKA	MAR 10	MAR 11
Fresh cases	217	181
Recoveries	301	260
Deaths	7	3



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Refund ₹27.5 cr GST to Swiggy: HC to Centre

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

THE Karnataka High Court on Friday directed the Union Government to refund Goods & Services Tax (GST) of Rs 27.51 crore to BundL Technologies Pvt Ltd, which operates the e-commerce platform Swiggy. The GST amount was reportedly collected during the course of investigation without following the procedures prescribed under the CGST Act.

A division bench of Justices Alok Aradhe and M G S Kamal passed the order while dismissing an appeal filed by the Union Government, Directorate General of Goods and Services Tax Intelligence and others against the order of a single-judge bench. The Centre had sought setting aside of a single-judge bench order of September 14, 2021, directing that Swiggy's applications for refund be considered. "Article 265 mandates that collection of tax has to be by the authority of law. If the tax is collected without any authority of law, it will amount to depriving a person of his property and infringe on his right under Article 300A of the Constitution of India as well," the court said.

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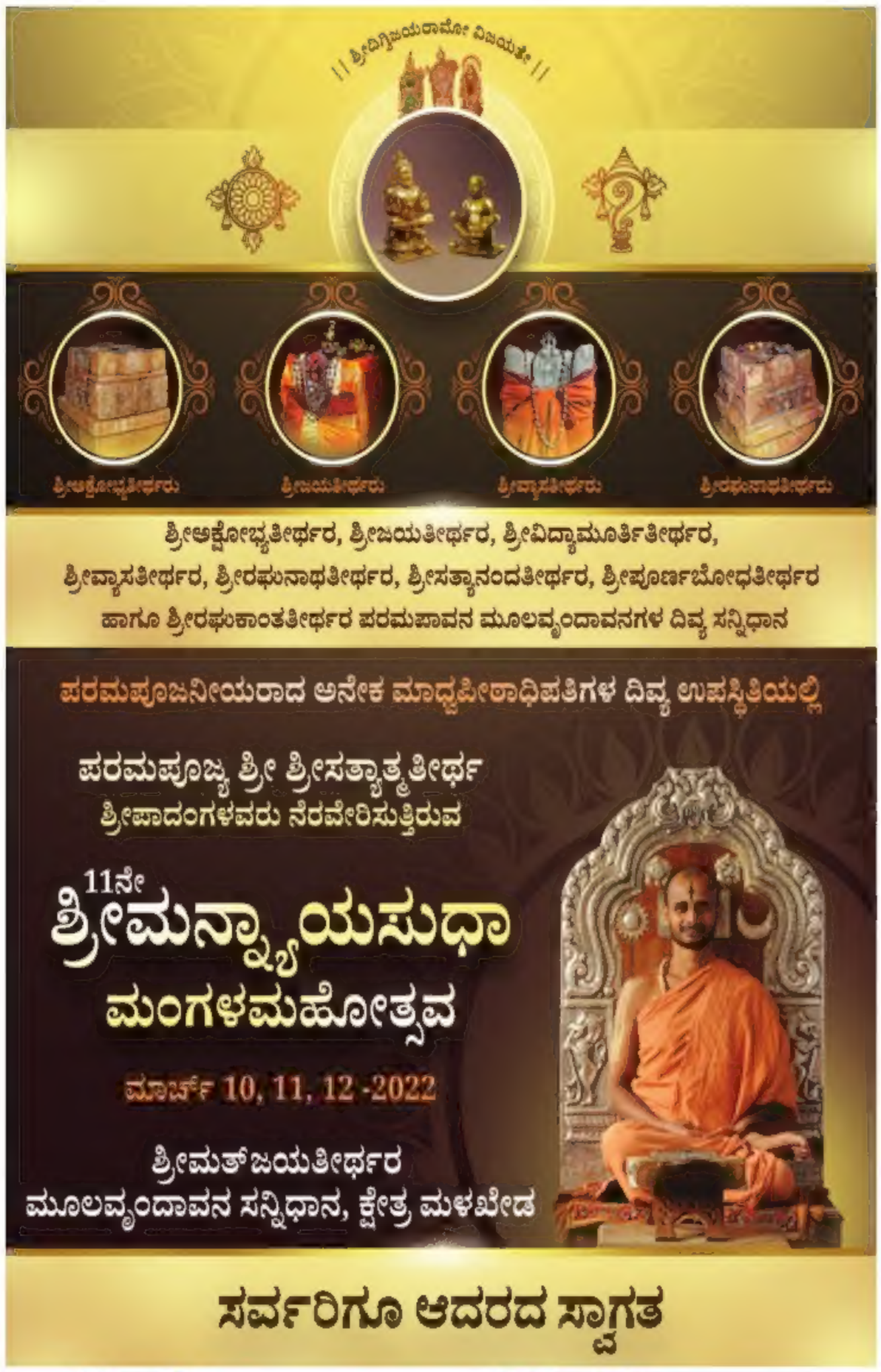

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